

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Marjorie Midkiff, 66, retired Pearl Harbor executive secretary

"On the Royal Hawaiian Hotel grounds. They used to have these swings, awning-type swings, you know, for the guests. At night, we'd sit there and tell stories. Those were the fun days."

Marjorie Midkiff, Caucasian-Chinese, was born on January 11, 1920 in Honolulu. She is the second of three daughters of Paul Carter, a Hawaiian Electric supervisor, and Helen Goo Carter, a schoolteacher. The family lived in Kaimukī until 1933 when they built their home in Waikīkī.

Midkiff attended Sacred Hearts Academy, Ali'iolani Elementary and Roosevelt High School. She continued her education at the University of Southern California.

In 1942 Midkiff married Merlin Paddock, a naval officer. When Paddock died in 1945, Midkiff was left with two daughters to raise so she moved back to her parents' home in Waikīkī.

Midkiff pursued a secretarial career working for the military. Initially she assisted an army general. Later she did research for the office of naval intelligence. And finally she worked for twenty years as an executive secretary at Pearl Harbor.

In 1973 she married Frank Midkiff, a prominent community figure. Since his passing, Midkiff has continued her husband's volunteer efforts with community organizations. She is currently a very active member of the board of trustees for the Hawai'i Army Museum, the Rehabilitation Hospital of the Pacific and the Japan-America Society of Honolulu.

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ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Marjorie Midkiff (MM)

May 25, 1986

Honolulu, O'ahu

BY: 'Iwalani Hodges (IH)

IH: This is an interview with Marjorie Midkiff at the Pacific Club in Downtown Honolulu on June 25, 1986. The interviewer is 'Iwalani Hodges.

Okay, Mrs. Midkiff, let's start out with where you were born.

MM: I was born in Honolulu.

IH: And where were your folks living at the time?

MM: In Kaimukī.

IH: And whereabouts in Kaimukī?

MM: Well, I don't quite remember. I believe the number, however, was 3966 Wai'alae Avenue. It's not there now, there's a freeway in front of it. But we had a large piece of property where we had eleven different varieties of mango trees, figs, strawberry guavas, bananas, papayas. Dad had built a tower by himself made out of (discarded square electric poles which he bought from the Hawaiian Electric Company). (The tower) went up to about six or seven stories (high) with a little observation (platform) on top. I remember when I was a child with my sisters, we and our friends used to climb this tower and pick the green or half-ripe mangoes. Of course, we always had our shaker salt with us. We'd eat green mangoes up there. And (from there) we could see the ocean and Koko Head.

IH: Is that what he built it for, just an observation point?

MM: Yes.

IH: Oh, how nice.

MM: He liked to see the ocean, and we couldn't see it (from the ground). Our trees were huge and in order to get to the top to pick the mangoes, (we had to climb the observation tower).

IH: Can you tell me something about your parents? Who were they?

MM: My mother was born here, and her parents came from China. My grandfather arrived first. He had a store. And then, my grandmother arrived. My father came as a young man. His parents were British. His father worked for Theo H. Davies. Of course, in those days, it was known as Janion & Green. That was before it was called Theo H. Davies. My grandfather came first, and then he sent for my grandmother. They lived on the Big Island for (several) years.

My father met my mother in Honolulu (at a Mormon Church luau). He was (working) with the Hawaiian Electric Company.

IH: Okay. And what are their names?

MM: Helen and Paul Carter.

IH: Do you recall your mother's maiden name?

MM: My mother's maiden name is Goo. And my father was Paul Leonard Carter.

IH: Okay. Now, about when did they move to Waikīkī?

MM: It was in (early 1934). Dad purchased the property in '29 or '30. They built a two-story colonial house. Mark Potter was the architect. It was of double-walled construction. It had a fireplace and twenty-five rooms. It was a large place. Typical colonial in front, and then Hawaiian style in back, U-shape, and Mother had a fish pond in the (courtyard). The service yard (was planted) with fruit trees. It was (located) on the corner of Ala Wai Boulevard and Walina Place. It was called Walina Place at that time, (and was a dead-end street). It has since been changed to Walina Street. Most of the streets were not through streets. There were trees, (mostly) kiawe as I remember, and bushes all around the area. In order to get to Kalākaua [Avenue], we used to walk down the Ala Wai to Ka'iulani Avenue, and then go to Kalākaua where we'd take the (streetcar). They had streetcars on Kalākaua Avenue to get to wherever we wanted to go, (then transfer to buses to get to school).

IH: So when you first moved in on the block, then, you were pretty much the only house there?

MM: The only house, (except for a small cottage at the end of Walina Place. I believe an elderly Hawaiian couple lived there.) And then, (much) later, right across the street on the other corner of Ala Wai and Walina (Place), the Frears built a one-story home, with a wall around it. At about that time, the (Terrance) Parkers (built) a two-story apartment building, and the (William) Norwoods (built) a house. (Also across the street from our property, Dan Topping built a beautiful one-story home with swimming pool and

tennis courts, which extended from Walina Place to Nahua Place. Movie celebrities rented the house from time to time. I remember Robert Wagner and Natalie Wood lived there when they were first married. The Palms condominium is on that property now.)

IH: Do you know why your father moved to Waikīkī?

MM: Well, in the early days when we were living in Kaimukī, we would go to the country, that is, Waikīkī, to go swimming. It was considered country to us. Then Mother and Dad found a piece of property right on Waimānalo Beach. They thought that would be a nice place to build a country house, so that's where we moved for the summer when we were out of school. Mother was a schoolteacher. We'd go over there and Dad would commute over the Pali in the old touring car. Or, on special occasions, such as holidays, (Thanksgiving and) Christmas, we'd go to Waimānalo. We loved it there. I wish we still had that property. (Chuckles) But then, when (Dad) found the property in Waikīkī that was available that he and Mother could buy, they decided to. Because Waikīkī Beach was really a lovely spot to visit and so convenient. When we moved to Waikīkī, they said, well, there was no use in keeping the Waimānalo property. They never rented it. It was just for our use to go over there. (After moving to Waikīkī, we rarely went to Waimānalo, so) they decided to sell it, I'm sorry to say. I wish (chuckles) we still had it.

So, Waikīkī in the old days was just beautiful. Of course, it's still a nice spot, but it's too busy right now. But we used to have such fun as children growing up because everyone was so friendly. We knew everyone. They knew us. There was no danger at all for young girls and boys to go out at night. We didn't have to lock our doors or windows. We'd walk alone to the beach and watch the dancers at the Royal Hawaiian Hotel over the wall. We'd go swimming at night. There was a floodlight, as I remember, or spotlight that extended out to the ocean from the Royal Hawaiian Hotel, and we used to go swimming there. (When we got) tired of swimming, we'd watch the dancers, all dressed in their long gowns; and (the men in their) dinner jackets. It was a beautiful time. We'd spend a lot of time on the Royal Hawaiian grounds, sitting on the swings.

IH: Where were those located?

MM: On the Royal Hawaiian Hotel grounds. They used to have these swings, awning-type swings, you know, for the guests. At night, we'd sit there and tell stories. Those were the fun days.

Then I remember when we were children, Dad had a forty-foot sampan which was called the Manuiwa. That wasn't the yacht Manuiwa, but his sampan Manuiwa. He loved the ocean, and he used to take his friends trolling to Moloka'i. He didn't like to hunt--never wanted to kill animals. His friends would go hunting on Moloka'i, but he loved to fish. He'd spend [time] trolling, on the sampan. He

never allowed females (to go on fishing trips, only) his men friends.

But anyway, we had a little motorboat that we had tied up (on the canal) in front of the house. There are a few steps going down to the (water). They were placed along the Ala Wai Boulevard so that you could walk down (to the water). I don't know whether they're still there. I guess they are. We had our outboard motorboat tied up there. But we kept the motor in the garage to keep it sheltered so it wouldn't get rusty, not because anyone would steal it. In those days, we didn't think of anyone stealing anything. But my sister and I used to put that motor, 'cause it was quite heavy, in a wheelbarrow and wheel it across the boulevard, which is just a short distance, and then go boating up and down the Ala Wai Canal. Sometimes, we'd anchor it in the middle of the canal and try to fish for Samoan crabs. There were beautiful Samoan crabs. The canal itself was not polluted. As a matter of fact, we felt nothing (dangerous) about swimming in it. It seemed clean to us. I guess you wouldn't go swimming in it now.

IH: How did you catch the Samoan crab?

MM: Generally, we used an old piece of meat, whatever Mother might have. We'd even snitch a piece of beef and (chuckles) put it on a hook, just anything, to get the crab. (And we always had a basket net with a long handle to scoop up the crab before it let go of the bait.)

IH: So you used hook and line?

MM: Yes, a little hook (for the bait). Just kid's stuff, hook and line. (Sometimes, instead of a hook, we'd tie the line around a small rock and piece of meat.) By golly, we'd get one or two. We used to like to watch the fishermen. (There were) always many fishermen along the banks of the Ala Wai who sat on what the carpenters call wooden horses. Is that what they're still called today?

IH: Mm hmm [Yes].

MM: And they'd sit there for hours and get the most beautiful fresh mullet. I say "fresh" mullet, because we'd go across the street, Mother would, and ask to buy (the fresh-caught) mullet. They, of course, had such great patience, those fishermen. They used bread (for bait) and they'd have their loaves of old bread by their side and sit there for hours. That was quite picturesque, in those days. Those were the fun days in Waikīkī. (Chuckles)

IH: Did you have a chance to wander very far in Waikīkī when you were growing up, or did you stay mostly in your neighborhood, from the Ala Wai to the beach?

MM: Yes. We had friends (in the neighborhood). Their names were

Burns, Margaret and Jean Burns (and their two brothers). They had a house further down towards the fire station, but on the Ala Wai [Boulevard]. I can't recall exactly the streets nearby, but they lived there. I don't remember or recall whether their house was there or they built it, or whether they arrived on the scene after we moved. But during that time, my sister and I, and the Burns girls were great friends. Their grandfather was former Governor [Charles J.] McCarthy. I remember that we used to go to the country on weekends and spend time at the McCarthy residence at Punalu'u. That was always great fun. (Another friend was Clarice Cross and she lived near Ka'iulani Avenue.)

IH: In that neighborhood that [the Burnses] lived in, were there a lot of residences there, also?

MM: No. More trees than anything else. Of course, there were little cottages called the 'Āinahau Cottages, somewhere in that area, and Mother and Dad owned those little cottages (in the early '20s). That was before they bought the property (on the Ala Wai) where our family home was. Mother was very interested in real estate. That was, I believe, the first piece of property (in Waikīkī they owned). (They later) sold it. I don't (think the cottages are there now), but I remember they were called the Āinahau Cottages. And then, later, they bought the property where our family home was.

IH: Now, to go from your property to the beach, if you didn't take the Ka'iulani route, what other route would you take?

MM: There was a wire fence (at the end of Walina Place), probably made out of chicken wire (which had) a large hole in it. I'm not saying we made the hole or moved the fence, or (chuckles) whatever, but we used it to go through. We'd cut through the shrubbery and trees, then we'd get to the Moana cottages for the employees of the Moana Hotel, then to Kalākaua [Avenue], and to the beach. We used the little access (path by) the (Moana) Hotel. We'd go swimming, and now and then, the beach boys would ask us if we'd like to go surfing. We always rode tandem. We never surfed by ourselves. I mean, the girls didn't do that. I don't know why, but I think it was because the boards were too heavy and we couldn't lift them. But we were always delighted when the beach boys (asked us) to go for a ride. The same way with the outrigger canoes. If there were not enough tourists to go in one canoe, maybe they'd ask one of us to fill up the boat. We always loved that, too, so we'd get a free ride. (Chuckles)

IH: Who were some of the beach boys that you remember at the time you were down there?

MM: Oh my, (chuckles) I don't think I. . . . Well, I will admit that I wasn't one who went to the beach every day. I didn't hang out, like a lot of the kids did. I think the reason for that is because my mother was very strict on our practicing our music, and doing

our (school and) homework, and all. Beaching was saved for weekends, Saturdays, Sundays, (and holidays). We couldn't go at any time like the children do today. On school days, we couldn't do anything like that. I mean, Mondays through Fridays, it was our schoolwork, our music, (home) chores, and whatnot. But on Saturdays and Sundays we'd go to the beach. I remember Duke Kahanamoku and "Sarge" [Sargent] Kahanamoku being there, and I think "Rabbit" [Kekai] was there, (also Alan "Turkey" Love, but he was younger than the others and still in school. There were others but I don't remember their names.)

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

IH: Okay. Can you tell me what the beach was like in the old days. You know, what structures were on the beach when you first moved down there?

MM: I remember beautiful white sand. The Royal Hawaiian Hotel always kept it swept (clean). In fact, the (sand) was always clean. They swept it or raked it in those early days. Every morning, early. The Royal Hawaiian Hotel had a lot of beach umbrellas and beach. . . .

IH: Beach chairs?

MM: Beach chairs, yes, for their guests. They were always there in front (of the hotel). And then, of course, the Outrigger Canoe Club had their surfboards. At the Uluniu [Women's Swimming Club], we could see the picnic tables, but they weren't all out on the beach. And then, the hau trees. I remember those. They were very healthy-looking (chuckles) hau trees. But the beach was always expansive and beautiful, what I remember. It was clean and (white).

IH: The Moana and the Royal Hawaiian were the only hotels on the beach at the time?

MM: Yes. The only hotels, the Moana and the Royal Hawaiian. (Further down on the beach towards town were the old Halekulani cottages and Niumalu cottages.) The Moana Hotel had a walkway (or pier) over the ocean. I don't know how many yards it went out over the ocean. There was also a dining room (that extended over the ocean), where they used to serve lunches and dinners. It was really a lovely spot, a romantic spot, to go to have your meals. (It was still there in the early '40s. I don't know when it was torn down.) Sometimes, I remember vaguely, when the current would take some of the sand away, it seemed to me it was probably around the Moana where that pier started. I recall seeing a lot of exposed rock or coral around there. I'm not sure but I still remember that at certain times of the year the current would wash away some of the sand, in certain areas in Waikiki. However, in front of the Royal [Hawaiian Hotel] and the Outrigger [Canoe Club], the sand was so nice and clean-looking. They really kept up the beach very well.

IH: Okay. And now, can you tell us what schools you attended?

MM: I went to the Ali'iōlani School as a youngster. Before I went to Ali'iōlani, I attended the Sacred Hearts Academy (in Kaimukī). I was four years old at the time in (kindergarten). They believed in early education and starting their children younger. I think that's a good thing, really, rather than the rule now, i.e., start at the age of six. Well, kindergarten for part of the year, when I was four years old. Five years old, first grade, Sacred Hearts Academy. The reason for that, my mother was very interested in painting. She thought all the sisters were excellent teachers. Not only in reading, writing, arithmetic, but in the arts, music, painting, and so forth. So she started me out with Sister Louise Margaret there, (when I was) very young. I took violin lessons from her, and Mother took her painting lessons. (My sister and I) went to the Sacred Hearts Academy for about one or two years, I guess. Then we transferred to Ali'iōlani School. (We were graduated after completing the eighth grade. Mrs. Scobie was the principal.) From there, we went to Roosevelt High School, (which was a brand-new school when we entered the ninth grade. We were the first graduating class).

IH: What grade did Roosevelt start with at that time?

MM: (The ninth grade.) My older sister and I were in the same grade, only because I skipped the sixth grade (at Ali'iōlani). Then we were together from the seventh grade on. When we were (juniors at Roosevelt), Mother wanted to send us to Punahou [School]. They felt they could afford to send us (chuckles) to Punahou then, but we absolutely refused to go. We didn't want to. But she insisted and then, when we heard that because we went to a public school we'd have to repeat the grade, we were insulted by that. Not my mother. She thought we'd get a better education at Punahou. But the rivalry between Punahou and Roosevelt was very strong then. We used to paint each other's buildings. We'd paint the Punahou dome our colors, [red] and gold, and they in turn would come to Roosevelt and paint our wall buff and blue. It was a friendly rivalry. We had a lot of friends at Punahou. However, my sister and I won. We didn't go to Punahou. We went on to our respective colleges, and it didn't hurt us any because we were both graduated with honors. But my younger sister, of course, went through Punahou, a fine school. But Roosevelt, in those days, we thought was really a wonderful school. It was. (Dad generally drove us to Roosevelt School in the mornings. Then after school we would take the bus by Roosevelt, transfer to another bus on Wilder Avenue by Punahou School, then transfer at the Pāwa'a junction to a streetcar on Kalakaua Avenue.)

IH: Were there any other Waikīkī residents that were going to Roosevelt that you know of?

MM: Yes, (Margaret and Jean Burns and Clarice Cross are the ones I remember).

IH: Okay. Now, you were living in Waikīkī during World War II.

MM: Oh, yes. We were there on the seventh of December [1941].

IH: So, can you tell me about that? What happened then?

MM: Well, first of all, I want to say that my father was chief air raid warden. He was a volunteer, started a year or two before the war started. There was a feeling that something might happen somewhere and that we should be prepared. I think it was not only Hawai'i but elsewhere. So he had to work very hard on that. He had about 300 volunteers. And then, on the seventh of December, I must say that the 300 volunteers were actually out helping people, hysterical women, delivering buckets of sand in case of fires, and all that sort of thing. But how we first heard about it was an early phone call from the Hawaiian Electric Company. My father was with the Hawaiian Electric Company. One of his men had called him from one of the power plants--(I think it was the Waiau plant)--saying that he needed to talk to my father, it was an urgent matter.

At that time, Father and Mother were taking a walk in the neighborhood. Well, I ran out in pajamas and called my father. He came hurrying in, couldn't imagine what was happening, why the urgency on a Sunday morning. So, when he got to the phone, I knew it was some serious talk. It was very brief. Dad looked at us and said that we were being attacked. We just stood there, numb. We just couldn't believe it. He (left immediately) to go to the Hawaiian Electric Company, and meanwhile, had gotten the air raid wardens out and (doing their job). But he spent most of his time at the Hawaiian Electric after that, and at city hall, where he practically stayed and slept on a cot for a couple of weeks. Couple of thousand volunteers (signed up for air raid warden duties). He couldn't get that many before, but because of the emergency, they all wanted to help (in some way).

My sister was a lab technician at Queen's Hospital and she was called also. We didn't see her for a long time. Mother helped at the Red Cross. My younger sister and I remained at home. All the radio stations weren't broadcasting, but one station had police reports. We were fascinated by them and it was a little bit scary because some vandals were taking advantage of the situation, especially at night, when we had to be in darkness. We didn't have any blackout material then, of course, to cover our windows (in the house) so there'd be no light showing. We'd sit in the dark and listen to police reports. Just Mother and (my younger sister and I were at home). It was a bad time.

After Dad got the phone call (in the early morning of the seventh), we went upstairs to an open deck that we had on the second floor and looked up and could see smoke in the distance. I imagine that came from Pearl Harbor. We could see dark smoke. And the planes flying overhead, we thought, of course, were ours. It was just

unbelievable that this was happening.

IH: You couldn't hear the attack from Waikīkī?

MM: No, really, we couldn't. I didn't hear anything. What was scary was we were imagining what was going on 'cause my sister did call in, saying they were bringing in bodies. They didn't have enough coffins. They were stacking them. I think by Williams Mortuary, there was (an empty) lot where they were stacking wooden coffins. You know, they started making coffins in a hurry for the people who were killed. My sister was having an extremely busy time at the hospital, and my father, being very busy, going back [and forth] from city hall to the Hawaiian Electric.

I worried about my first husband--we weren't married but we were engaged--who was at Pearl Harbor. At that time, he was in the hospital for an operation, a hernia operation. He had just had the operation, I think, the day before, and he still had the clamps on. Of course, the old patients were ignored while they were bringing in the wounded. He was walking around (the hospital) trying to see what he could do to help. He was attached to the Minneapolis and at the time the Minneapolis was out at sea.

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

IH: What was Waikīkī like during the war years, what do you recall?

MM: I remember we didn't go to the beach during the early days of the war. We were kept off the beach, I think. There was a lot of barbed wire, and amazingly enough, that wire wasn't very good. It was rusted wire. Shows you how unprepared we were. You could just break it off. But they had strung it up all along the beach. We were too scared to go to the beach. It was sort of frightening in the beginning. This was all new to us. So, we didn't go swimming, (boating or surfing).

IH: So, was Waikīkī a pretty quiet place then?

MM: They had patrols, as I remember, they had patrols in certain areas. So, it was pretty quiet. I don't think people could venture out without being questioned, you know, what they were doing on the beach, or (on the streets). We didn't want to anyway. Some may have gone swimming, but I don't recall seeing 'cause I didn't go.

IH: I would imagine the visitor industry pretty much ended during the war, too.

MM: Oh, yes. That all stopped. But of course, the military took over the Royal, you know. I think the submariners had the Royal Hawaiian Hotel. And at the Moana, there were a lot of the military. The hotels were open to them for recreation time or for, later on, their social functions.

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

IH: Was the military quite noticeable then, in Waikīkī?

MM: Very much so. Of course they didn't hang out there. They were given R&R [rest and recreation] periods. It could be, later on of course, the men who came from ships and who were given periods of rest and recreation. I remember the Chamber of Commerce had sponsored dances. And this was many months later or almost a year later, they'd have dances for the young naval officers and young enlisted men. The young girls were always invited to the dances at the Alexander Young Roof Garden. It was for the junior officers. Of course, it was a glamorous period for the girls. They had so many dates. And the local boys would just have a fit because a girl could get two or three dates in an evening. I mean, men were plentiful, not like it is now. I hear the young girls today complaining there're not enough men around for a social life. Oh, yes, it was, in a way, a glamorous period and a fun period for those of us growing up.

IH: Didn't you get married around that time?

MM: Yes. My first husband was a graduate of the naval academy. The navy had a policy that young ensigns could not be married for a certain number of years. Let me see, was it two or three? I've forgotten how many years. But after the war started, they dropped that policy. "Paddy" (Merlin Paddock) and I were engaged in 1940, and we were able to be married in July 1942.

IH: Were you still living at Waikīkī during that time?

MM: Oh, yes. I was living there. I was secretary to General Thomas Green, executive to the military governor, Delos Emmons. He had his office at 'Iolani Palace. Ernest Kai was attorney general, I think, at that time. I remember "Paddy" (suspected) that he would probably be going out to sea again. (He had previously experienced the Coral Sea and Midway battles.) I recall that my wedding gown was ordered through McInerny's. McInerny's was THE store in town. It would take two or three months for the gown to come to Hawai'i. "Paddy" came to my office one day and he said, "We're going to be married today." (I was shocked at the idea because I didn't have my wedding gown. His reasoning was that he had a hunch he would be joining his ship and would be leaving soon.)

(He walked into General Green's office and asked permission to let me take the rest of the day off to be married. This was on July 2, 1942. General Green consented but not before showing disappointment in my marrying a naval officer instead of an army officer.)

(Laughter)

MM: I called Mother before I left the office. She was horrified

because she was thinking of all the preparations she had planned for the future. Everything was rationed. She wanted to have a nice party and so forth. I said, "Mother, it can't be helped. We're going to get married this afternoon."

"Paddy" was very lucky to get the bridal suite at the old Halekūlani Hotel. We were married in the living room of our family home, and then went to the Moana Hotel, for our wedding supper. I'll never forget that because she kept saying, "Now, hurry up, hurry up, and go." This was right after the wedding supper. We were using her car. I remember it was a Buick convertible. Using her car, and it wasn't equipped for blackout. I mean, the headlights (weren't painted black), and she was so afraid it was going to get dark, and that her car would be picked up for not having the headlights blacked out.

(Laughter)

MM: Anyway, from the Moana Hotel, we went to the Halekūlani. (He left three days later on his ship, the cruiser Minneapolis, which engaged in the Solomon Islands campaign.) I returned to work for General Green during that time. My gown arrived while "Paddy" was away. Mother was determined to (have my wedding reception eventually and) she asked all our friends to save their liquor ration stamps. Well, I don't (remember all the items that were rationed), but liquor was and meat (and other items were scarce). So, they all saved their ration stamps. When "Paddy" returned, I wore my wedding gown for the first time. Mother and Dad had a big reception in our family home. She had Robin ("Bob") McQuestin and his trio play (semi-classical) music. We had champagne and lots of food; it was a lovely time for us.

IH: Okay. You know, I think, earlier, you told me a little bit about your house and yard. Could you tell me a little bit more about the yard? I know there were some more buildings in the back.

MM: Well, Dad had nine lots there. He and Mother had (our family home), the two-story colonial house. On the second floor, in front, she had her red geraniums in the window boxes and there were green shutters (on all the windows). We had four formal pillars in front of the house and a red brick walkway with two gateposts also of brick. Dad had ships' lanterns on top of the gateposts, and we had a little white wooden gate. (The whole yard) was fenced and we had a plumbago hedge around the yard.

Then, in back, the house was U-shaped. All the doors opened to the lanai. There was what we called a courtyard where Mother had her fish pond. By the way, Dad brought the toads into Waikīkī for the bugs. So I don't know if anybody gets angry about that. (However, since there are so many high-rises in Waikīkī now, I haven't seen a toad there in years. They probably moved into the canal and then to the Ala Wai Golf Course.)

IH: Were there a lot of bugs there when you folks were living there?

MM: Yes, there were flies, mosquitoes, (beetles) and so forth. The toads were good for that. But they would start singing at night. They sounded like riveting machines (chuckles). On a quiet night, (all the neighbors) could hear them. I mean, after people started moving in around there. Mother had her fish (pond with) the water lilies and a spray fountain. And then, from that courtyard, there were steppingstone steps--two or three steps--that led to the back yard, where there was a big lawn. We had a (large) breadfruit tree there in that lawn area. At the end of that we had a low grape-wood stake fence (bordered by) Hawaiian roses. We had a big spotlight from the second floor--the open deck on the second floor--shining down on the Hawaiian roses to keep the Japanese beetles away. (The spotlight turned on) automatically (each evening. During the war, however, we could not turn on the spotlight.) Beyond this grape stake fence, we had all kinds of fruit trees. Mangoes, papayas, bananas, all that sort of thing. But of course, the soil, being sandy, was not as good as the soil we had in Kaimukī, so we had more fruit trees (in Kaimukī).

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

IH: Okay. So, you had lot of trees. And what was beyond that?

MM: And that was the end. There was another fence that was the property of our home. Now, beyond that, Mother and Dad later built a two-story apartment building. On the top floor, there were two penthouses. Imagine, on the second floor, calling these two penthouses, but they were very spacious and had wide open sun decks. The apartments downstairs, I've forgotten how many there were, but each one had a gate and a little garden. I mean, they were individual gardens. They didn't go in for large numbers (of apartments to take up every bit of space). They wanted an attractive place to match the family house. In front of all the apartments downstairs, there was a big yard for (the tenants) to use, also. Many years later (my parents) sold that. And then, right next door on the Ala Wai, they had a piece of property where they built two cottages which matched our home. That was (also built later).

IH: Were those cottages rented out, also?

MM: Yes. Mother and Dad rented those two cottages. They were white with green roofs (which matched) the main house. By the way, we used (the fireplace) at Christmas time and New Year's, and would open all the windows so (it wouldn't be too warm). But we had many happy years there growing up, and we loved it. Everything there was convenient--the beach, boating, fishing, everything. It was

wonderful. And no scares about walking at night (with our friends). We'd go to Waikīkī at night to see some excitement, that is, the grownups dancing, or swimming. It was just lots of fun.

IH: And then, later, you raised your own children there also, didn't you?

MM: When I became a widow, yes. Oh, first of all, before we get on to that, I do want to say that my mother got special permission to raise chickens during the war years because fresh eggs were hard to get, were expensive. But she had a lot of chickens there, and I remember the yardman used to keep the coops very clean. He'd put lye (on the ground) so there wouldn't be any odor. But the rooster would (crow and) wake up everybody around (chuckles) the area. (Neighbors) didn't mind, however, because Mother and Dad always were (generous in) giving their fresh eggs and chickens, you know, because they were hard to get. Of course, when the war ended, they gave up (raising) chickens.

But now, to go back, I became a widow in 1945. I had two baby girls. I returned home to live with my parents. We were able to fill up the house then, because my two sisters were away. The older sister was married, and my younger sister was going to Cornell University after graduation from Punahou. (My two babies and) I stayed with Mother and Dad. It was very fortunate for me 'cause it was a nice house. (Growing up, our family) had a wonderful lady, Kawada-san, who lived with us. After she died, we had another one, Michi-san, who was very helpful, (and she was there when I lived there as a widow). Of course, I worked, also. I went to work.

IH: What school did you send them to?

MM: Both my girls went to Punahou.

IH: Oh, so they never went to Waikīkī School?

MM: (No. They attended Jefferson School in Waikīkī) when they were little. And then, they transferred to Punahou in the seventh grade. (I want to point out that there were two elementary schools located on the Diamond Head side of Waikīkī. One was Jefferson School and the other was Waikīkī School. Both are still in existence.) Before they enrolled (at Jefferson), they went to what was called the Fairyland Preschool. Both my girls went to Fairyland because I was working and Mother and Dad, of course, were busy. We felt that they needed companionship of other children.

IH: Was that located in Waikīkī?

MM: Well, closer to the fire station in Kapahulu. It was a nice little preschool.

IH: How did they like (Jefferson) School?

MM: They liked it. It was an excellent (public) school. The teachers were marvelous. They had a very good education at Jefferson School. I was very fortunate with that situation. I remember that one year Jefferson was being remodeled or (renovated and) my youngest daughter had to go to Fort DeRussy (during that time for about a year). Classes (were held temporarily) at Fort DeRussy. I remember that because she was so young, I always worried about (her going so far away). Her grandfather, my father, said, "Don't worry. I'll put her on the bus. It's good training for her. When she's due to come home, I'll be out there in the front yard." 'Cause the bus passed right by our house. By that time, we had buses (in Waikiki). In my day, growing up, we had streetcars.

IH: Going back to right after the war when, I guess, locally, (there was a lot) of rebuilding. How had Waikiki changed?

MM: Well, buildings started to go up fast. The streets were, all these dead-end streets, now were through streets to take care of traffic. Traffic became heavier. There were different tourists coming because of hotels going up. The tourists who were not able to afford a trip to Hawai'i in the past were beginning to arrive. There was more activity. There were hamburger stands and hot dog stands, and so forth during the war. I think the war changed a lot. The war years changed Waikiki a great deal. Property (to buy) was (available and) reasonable. Because a lot of people living here were scared and wanted to get out of the territory immediately (after the war started and they) sold their places very cheap. But the smart people were buying property.

IH: Oh, so you think a lot of newcomers came during that period of time into Waikiki?

MM: Not during the war, after the war. Nobody wanted to come during the war. As a matter of fact, you couldn't come during the war. (We were living in Pensacola at the time. However, because I was an Islander and had family living here), I got special permission to (return home with my daughter, and) I was pregnant with my second child. I came on the President Tyler. My husband came over with his squadron and they went over to Maui for training, before they went out to join the carrier. He was aboard the Langley. So, local residents could return--(those who married) the military and had a home to come to, or family here. So that's why I was able to come home. But not just anybody could come. For instance, a lot of the servicemen who had wives on the Mainland couldn't bring them to Hawai'i. But of course, we wanted to come home. So, we did, (but had to get permission and proof we had a home to come to and family).

IH: So then, after the war, (buildings were constructed all over) Waikiki?

MM: Yes, really, by leaps and bounds.

IH: Were single homes built or were they mostly apartments?

MM: Mostly apartments. There were a lot of single cottages. People, perhaps, who owned their own little piece of property put up little cottages or people who did it for investment had several cottages that they rented out. But as time went on, there was no real value in that because you're just getting rental from a few cottages. If they were able to get a loan and put up a high-rise, well, that's what they would do. And so, the demand was there. People who needed money would sell their land for a profit to those who wanted to develop and make their own money (chuckles), you know, (developers). My parents leased their property. They sold one portion in the back where they had the two-story building, the one with the two penthouses on top and the (smaller apartments) below--the one-bedrooms and studios--mainly because they were getting along in years and they just couldn't take care of them anymore. So they got rid of that. And then, when I remarried, they leased the property on the (corner of) Ala Wai and Walina Place, where our family home (was located. Later, after Dad died, Mother leased the other piece of property where their two-story apartment was located on Walina Place. The Ala Wai Palms condominium and the Waikiki King Apartment-Hotel are presently located on our family home property).

IH: This is in later years, right? In the '60s?

MM: (Yes, in 1961. The property where) the main house (was located) was leased first. The house was torn down. We felt very sad about that. But Dad said, "It's progress. You can see what's happening in Waikiki." (They lived in our family home for about twenty-seven years.) Mother said that she cried when the chimney (was knocked) down. She didn't before then, but when she saw that chimney go, she cried. Just before they leased that front portion where the main house was, (the part) which was once the service yard, where we had all the fruit trees and the chickens, they built the two-story apartment for themselves. It was huge, their apartment on the second floor. Dad still had his workshop and his library and storage room, and so forth. And then, that was all fenced. He had (installed a) magic garage opener. That was fairly new in those days, I guess, for the car. And Mother still had her lily pond and her orchids (in the yard). She had a green thumb. She grew beautiful orchids. That's where they could watch the family house being torn down. Mother said she was coming home (carrying) groceries when the big concrete ball on a crane knocked down the chimney. She said she sat on the stairs to the apartment where they were living and where she could view the whole thing, and cried.

IH: Well, they were there for . . .

MM: That was the end of an era for us, as far as we were concerned, in Waikiki.

IH: So, she had lived there already about thirty years at that time, wasn't it?

MM: A long time, (about twenty-seven years).

IH: So how was it raising your children there? Were there any problems?

MM: No.

IH: At that time, was it still pretty safe in Waikīkī?

MM: Well, I hate to say safe, but, I mean, there were burglaries going on. I think the war brought a lot of it on. We had to lock the doors. We had to be sure we knew where our children were. We watched them very carefully.

IH: So, they weren't allowed to . . .

MM: No. Not the way . . .

IH: . . . go freely like you were?

MM: No, they didn't walk anywhere freely. During the day, fine, they could ride a bicycle or whatever. But never at night. But even when they were very young, we really kept our eyes on them. Well, I guess, because traffic being what it was, we were afraid they would get hit by a car. That's when they were really little until they were fairly grown. But we always had to lock up. It wasn't like the old days. Those days were gone. I wouldn't consider letting my girls go to the beach at night as we did, to go swimming at Waikīkī Beach or to look at the hotels' guests (dancing at) the hotels. Oh, never, never. That was a no-no. (Chuckles)

IH: So it really had changed a lot, then, from when you had grown up and then your children grew up.

MM: Very much, very much.

IH: Do you ever go down to Waikīkī anymore to visit the property?

MM: Oh, I go down there every day. My mother still lives there. She absolutely refuses to leave Waikīkī.

IH: Oh, she still lives on (the Ala Wai).

MM: No, she has an apartment there, but she moved herself to Laniolu [Good Samaritan Center] which is on Lewers Street. When she decided to move, it was because she got tired of grocery shopping and (cooking). She's ninety-four and a half [years old]. She's been pretty independent. She's still independent. But she, and we feel a lot better by it, that she is not living alone. She tried having someone, a maid, living with her, but living in an apartment

is different than living in a house, you see. She does not like to be cooped up too much. So she still gads about. She's (beginning to get) frail now, so we tell her not to go (out so much). We're often surprised when she's walked here and there in busy Waikīkī. She always walked to the Waikīkī Post Office, and that's quite a distance. Even I don't like to do it. But now I pick up her mail there at the post office for her and try to see her every day. If I'm not able to, I call her because I don't want her to be lonely. But there's a lot of activity, and that's what she likes, activity. Of course, she loved the old days, but when you get older and you're not able to go (out so much) and do all the things (you are used to, it's depressing to her, but) she likes to sit and watch what others do. (There is so much activity in Waikīkī, she loves it.)

IH: So, she still likes it in Waikīkī?

MM: Oh, yes. I tried for the longest time to get her out of Waikīkī because I felt it was too busy a place for her now. No way could I (get her to) move. She (absolutely) refused. So, she still has her property and still has her apartment there which she finally rented last year. But she used to walk back and forth. She'd go to Laniolu for her meals. That's how the first move was. She wanted to have her meals, you know, because she got tired of cooking, tired of grocery shopping. She wanted to do some of her paperwork there. So she had a couple of files and a bed brought over. It was just this past Christmas that she (decided to live at Laniolu permanently). She always felt that she could go back to her own apartment and was always threatening to do that, which my sisters and I would worry about. You know, being alone without people around.

IH: Were you living in the house on (the Ala Wai) when they opened [Wailana Place] through to Kūhio [Avenue]? Do you remember that time?

MM: Frankly, I don't remember when they finally opened up that street. It could have been during the early days of the war or maybe before then, I'm not sure.

IH: So you don't recall them opening it?

MM: I don't recall when it was opened, but when we moved in, in the early '30s, no, it wasn't open at all. Just Ka'iulani [Avenue] was, (which was closest to our home). But of course, there were other through streets but very few. The one I remember the best, of course, was Ka'iulani because I had to walk it to get (chuckles) to the streetcar.

IH: So when they opened up your street then, the traffic, did it . . .

MM: Still wasn't too bad.

IH: It wasn't?

MM: No.

IH: So, that time wasn't too busy, still in Waikīkī?

MM: No, it wasn't too busy, but it certainly started growing. Oh, my, how it grew. More buildings, more people, and more tour buses. It just seems to have grown by leaps and bounds. And then, (the value of) property went up (quite high). Scarce. That's what always happens when there's a scarcity of land. The property values go up, the taxes go up. Terrible. (Chuckles)

IH: Okay. I think that's all the questions I have, unless you'd like to add anything else.

MM: That's all.

IH: Okay. Thank you.

END OF INTERVIEW

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